

Refugee Resettlement in Washington Site-Visit Report

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1. Introduction

This report is commissioned by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), United States Department of Health and Human Services, as part of ORR's Impact Assessment Project. The Project seeks to assess the impact of refugee service delivery in the context of the current economic downturn and changes in the numbers and complexity of refugee populations. The report is the second of five planned reports, each assessing refugee service delivery in a particular state.

The current report looks at the refugee resettlement program in the Seattle area (including King, Pierce and Snohomish Counties) in the state of Washington. It is based on questionnaire responses, a document review, and a site visit by the Refugee High Impact Project assessment team. The Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA), responded to an initial pre-assessment questionnaire, provided most of the documents reviewed, and arranged for the site visit.

The assessment team views its work as a collaborative endeavor. In that regard, it extends its heartfelt thanks to ORIA and to the voluntary organization affiliates, Mutual Assistance Associations and service providers for their time, efforts and insights. Neither this report, nor refugee integration into King County communities, would be possible without their efforts.

COUNTY	% of Pop
State	12.2
Asotin County	1.9
Benton County	10.1
Chelan County	13.1
Clallam County	4.5
Clark County	9.6
Cowlitz County	4.4
Douglas County	15
Franklin County	25.3
Grant County	17.7
Grays Harbor County	4.9
Island County	6.7
Jefferson County	5.2
King County	19
Kitsap County	6.2
Kittitas County	5.9
Klickitat County	6.8
Lewis County	4.5
Mason County	4.3
Okanogan County	8.5
Pacific County	7.7
Pierce County	8.7
Skagit County	10.9
Snohomish County	12.7
Spokane County	4.7
Stevens County	2.9
Thurston County	7.1
Walla Walla County	9.4
Whatcom County	11.7
Whitman County	10
Yakima County	18.4

2. Demographic Profile

Washington has a population of 6,371,390 (in 2008), 12.2 percent of which was foreign-born. Seattle is a community which values its diversity and recognizes both the contributions and needs of foreign-born populations. As a result, it has well-developed and well-utilized translator services. For instance, city documents and forms are translated into 17 different languages. Throughout the Seattle area one sees small business and other economic development which is spurred by refugees, immigrants and trade in a global economy.

Table I—Foreign Born by County (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2007, American Community Survey)

ORR records indicate that 15,226 refugees, asylees, Cubans, and Iraqi/Afghani Special Immigrant Visa holders were resettled in Washington State in 2004-2008. Unless otherwise stated, throughout this report, the term "refugee" will be used to refer to all those who were admitted with a status which qualified them for refugee benefits, and who have not yet obtained citizenship. Arriving refugees during the past year speak at least 25 different languages, with Burmese being the largest single group. Five-year arrivals are summarized by type and

resettlement county in Table II below. Arrivals by country of origin over the period October 2007 through April 2009 are summarized in Table III and shown in Chart I. Secondary migrants are summarized in Table IV and Chart II.

County	Entrant	Asylee	Amerasian	Refugee	SIV	Parolee	Total	% of Total
BENTON	3	2		509	2		516	3.4%
CHELAN		9					9	0.1%
CLALLAM		13					13	0.1%
CLARK		47	1	1349			1397	9.2%
COWLITZ		6		2			8	0.1%
DOUGLAS		7				1	8	0.1%
FRANKLIN	2	13		75			90	0.6%
GRANT		8		120			128	0.8%
GRAYS HARBOR		4		10			14	0.1%
ISLAND		8					8	0.1%
KING	8	1566	8	6661	13	8	8264	54.3%
KITSAP		5		9			14	0.1%
KITTITAS		2					2	0.0%
LEWIS		4					4	0.0%
MASON		11					11	0.1%
PIERCE	1	175		1033	7		1216	8.0%
SAN JUAN		1					1	0.0%
SKAGIT		2		77			79	0.5%
SNOHOMISH	1	311		1227	2	2	1543	10.1%
SPOKANE	1	21		1433	1		1456	9.6%
STEVENS				11			11	0.1%
THURSTON		29		94	1		124	0.8%
WALLA WALLA		13		23			36	0.2%
WHATCOM		94		156			250	1.6%
WHITMAN		11					11	0.1%
YAKIMA		10			3	11	13	0.1%
Total	16	2372	9	12789	29	22	15226	100%
% of WA Total	0.1%	15.6%	0.1%	84.0%	0.2%	0.1%	100.0%	

Table II— Washington Arrivals, FY 2004-FY 2008 (Source: ORR)

Statewide data for the Limited English Proficient (LEP) population enrolled in assistance under either Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) or Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) indicate that Washington is serving people who speak at least 38 different languages (not all of whom are refugee groups). The largest single language grouping in the TANF population is Russian/Ukrainian, at 35% of the LEP population receiving TANF. This group outnumbers Hispanics, which make up only 24% of the LEP TANF population. Somali make up the next substantial group at 16%. None of the remaining 35 population groups account for more than 5% of the LEP TANF population. Approximately 47% of the state's LEP/TANF population is in the Seattle area.

The Seattle area is a gateway city for immigration, especially from Asia. The overall foreign born population, at 18.4%, exceeds the national average. King, Snohomish and Pierce Counties resettled 11,023 refugees, asylees and entrants during FY 2004-2008 time period. It also experienced significant in-migration, primarily of Somali and Russian Pentecostal refugees. This site accounts for more than two thirds of all resettlement in Washington.

The difference in state and ORR numbers of refugees and asylees is significant. According to ORR, there were 989 in-migrants from other states, with net secondary refugee in-migration of 724 in Washington in 2006-2008. However, state records indicate that there were 4,640 secondary migrants. The situation for asylees is even more confusing: The Department of Homeland Security reports that 1,075 individuals were granted asylum by the USCIS in 2006-2008 who lived in Washington, but they do not report state-level information on the half of all asylees who are granted asylum by the courts. Washington indicates it has served 2,394 asylees, which would be consistent with doubling the USCIS data. However, ORR uses data only on those asylees for whom the state collects and reports sufficient identifying information to pass their data vetting process—28 passed this test. Using ORR data, Washington ranks sixth in the net number of refugees, asylees and other refugee-eligible populations resettled in the past three years¹ and second in the number of net secondary in-migrants.

To prepare the social services funding formula, ORR develops data concerning NET secondary migration (excluding those who have moved out of the state and including those known to have moved in). These data exclude refugees claimed as secondary migrants by two or more states. While ORR has data on the actual number of individuals granted asylum in any state, the number

Country of Origin	FY 2008	10/08-4/09	Σ	% Total
Afghanistan	6	7	13	0.4%
Belarus	31	16	47	1.3%
Bhutan	303	263	566	16.1%
Burma	616	334	950	27.0%
Burundi	48		48	1.4%
Burundi		2	2	0.1%
Chad	1		1	0.0%
China	2		2	0.1%
Colombia	2	2	4	0.1%
Congo		5	5	0.1%
Costa Rica		1	1	0.0%
Cuba	62	16	78	2.2%
Dem Repub of Congo	4	9	13	0.4%
Eritrea	22	38	60	1.7%
Estonia	6		6	0.2%
Ethiopia	17		17	0.5%
Georgia	11		11	0.3%
Iran	61	64	125	3.6%
Iraq	222	118	340	9.7%
Ivory Coast	1		1	0.0%
Jordan	4		4	0.1%
Kazakhstan	4	17	21	0.6%
Kyrgyzstan	4	12	16	0.5%
Latvia		2	2	0.1%
Liberia	12	3	15	0.4%
Moldova	160	119	279	7.9%
North Korea	8		8	0.2%
Russia	137	55	192	5.5%
Rwanda	1		1	0.0%
Sierra Leone	1		1	0.0%
Somalia	103	73	176	5.0%
Sudan	2	11	13	0.4%
Togo	6		6	0.2%
Uganda	3		3	0.1%
Ukraine	326	65	391	11.1%
Uzbekistan	1	4	5	0.1%
Vietnam	60	37	97	2.8%
Total	2247	1273	3520	100.0%

Table III—Washington Arrivals by Country of Origin, Oct. 2007-April 2009 (Source: Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System--WRAPS)

¹ ORR Notice of Final Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 Formula Allocations to States for Refugee Social Services

included in the funding formula include only those asylees for whom a state has been able to capture sufficient data to document that they have been served. While these numbers may make a reasonable proxy of need for allocating funds among states, they do not provide a clear picture of need for state planning purposes. Washington's data, if accurate, indicates they are working with a three-year population 81% larger than ORR's data indicate. Each state must maintain a system for all comers, and needs to plan for all of the refugees who arrived in the state (even if they leave), all the refugees who migrate from other states, all of the asylees and victims of trafficking who are potential clients. Because the refugee population is quite mobile, this universe of the population to be served is difficult to document but essential for planning. Complete data on all potential clients should be aggregated and published in a clear fashion on a regular basis to facilitate planning. Progress reports of populations served and outcomes relative to needs become distorted when agencies use incomplete figures for the base population of need. While duplicate counts of populations who move may mean that the sum of the population served in all states exceeds the number resettled, it is important for ORR and the states to collect complete data on all the populations in each state.

The arrival rates over the past three years have been relatively steady, and there appears to be good communication between the voluntary agencies and the State Coordinator concerning planned and actual arrivals. However, as of June, the 2009 arrivals were running 50% ahead of prior year-to-date numbers. The State Coordinator did not know whether this

reflected a change in the actual number of refugees who would be admitted that year, or that refugees were being admitted earlier in the year as the State Department works to eliminate the "September bulge." While the numbers of arrivals have been relatively constant the population has changed in two significant ways: family cases have been largely replaced by "free" cases; and the number of different languages has greatly increased. Both of these factors increase the need for staffing resources.

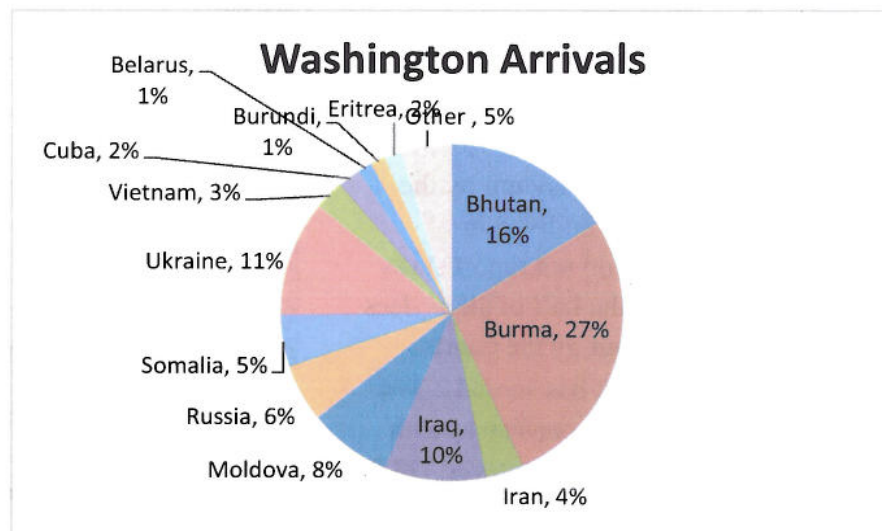


Chart I—Washington Arrivals by Country of Origin, Oct. 2007-April 2009 (Source: Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System--WRAPS)

The economic recession has hit Washington hard, although its unemployment rate remains below the national average. Washington's unemployment rate rose from 4.9 percent in May of 2008 to 9.2 percent in May 2009. King County fares a little better, with an unemployment rate of 8.8%, but the number of unemployed in the county has doubled in the past year, and unemployment continues to rise (See Table IV). Major employers, such as Boeing and Microsoft, have stopped hiring, drying up the "good" jobs in the community. Seattle has a large tourist industry, and the downturn in tourism has especially impacted refugees in the hospitality (hotel and restaurant) employment.

State/Area	Civilian Labor Force (000's)				Unemployed (000's)							
	April		May		April		May		Percent of Labor Force			
	2008	2009p	2008	2009p	2008	2009p	2008	2009p	2008	2009	2008	2009
Washington	3,438.3	3,517.8	3,445.9	3,555.5	153.6	313.5	168.5	327.4	4.5	8.9	4.9	9.2
Bellingham	108.6	108.9	108.4	110.6	4.6	9.1	4.9	9.3	4.3	8.3	4.5	8.4
Bremerton-Silverdale	124	122.4	123.6	124.1	5.4	10	5.8	10.1	4.4	8.2	4.7	8.2
Kennewick-Pasco-Richland	119.3	123	121.6	128.6	5.6	9.5	5.9	9.2	4.7	7.7	4.9	7.2
Longview	43.8	45.2	44.1	45.8	3.1	6.8	3.3	6.5	7.1	15.1	7.5	14.2
Mount Vernon-Anacortes	58.3	58.8	58.4	60.4	2.8	6.1	3	6.1	4.9	10.4	5.1	10.1
Olympia	130.8	134.1	130.6	135.3	5.8	10.6	6.1	10.8	4.4	7.9	5.7	8
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue	1844.2	1891.8	1850.5	1906.4	69.9	149.4	82.5	167.4	3.8	7.9	4.5	8.8
Spokane	238	241	237.7	243	11.3	22.5	11.5	22.1	4.7	9.4	4.8	9.1
Wenatchee-West Wenatchee	58.4	57.7	58.5	57.9	3	5.5	3.4	5.3	5.1	9.5	5.7	9.1
Yakima	118.3	119.5	119.3	120.8	7.6	11.5	7.9	11.2	6.4	9.6	6.6	9.3

Table IV—Michigan Unemployment Rates (Source: U.S. Department of Labor)

3. Program Design

a. State Agencies

Washington's Refugee Program is state administered and is operated by the Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA) within the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). ORIA is part of the Economic Services Administration (ESA) within DSHS. ESA's core services focus on helping low-income individuals and families meet their basic needs and achieve economic independence through cash grants, food and medical assistance, employment-focused services, subsidized child care, and child support services. Major programs include the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Washington Basic Food (the Food Stamp Program), General Assistance, Refugee Assistance, and Child Support Enforcement.

As indicated by its name, ORIA serves more than just the refugee population. Its mission is to help all refugees and immigrants successfully integrate into Washington communities. It administers a broad array of employment, social and citizenship services for refugees and

immigrants. It is currently staffing the Governor's New Americans Policy Council, which was formed to develop recommendations on strategies for successful immigrant integration.

The State Refugee Health Coordinator is funded in part with refugee funds and is located in ORIA. She supervises the refugee health screening program, the development of mental health screening and services and tuberculosis (TB) treatment.

ORIA provides services through contracts with government agencies, voluntary resettlement

agencies (Volags), local community colleges, and community based

organizations involved in the resettlement of refugees and immigrants. DSHS partners with three other state agencies to provide employment services to refugees. These are the Employment Security Department (ESD), the Department of Commerce (DOC), and the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC). ESD provides employment services to

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN		INITIAL RESETTLEMENT	
AFGHANISTAN	8	ALABAMA	10
BURMA	22	ARIZONA	77
BURUNDI	16	CALIFORNIA	61
CHINA	1	COLORADO	19
CUBA	4	CONNECTICUT	3
DEM.REP.CONGO	1	DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	8
ERITREA	37	FLORIDA	67
ETHIOPIA	43	GEORGIA	59
IRAN	26	IDAHO	13
LIBERIA	3	ILLINOIS	31
NEPAL	1	INDIANA	4
RWANDA	1	IOWA	4
SOMALIA	508	KANSAS	2
SUDAN	7	KENTUCKY	9
THAILAND	3	MAINE	3
TOGO	5	MARYLAND	17
USSR	296	MASSACHUSETTS	33
VIETNAM	7	MICHIGAN	21
Total	989	MINNESOTA	103
		MISSOURI	10
		NEBRASKA	3
		NEVADA	1
		NEW HAMPSHIRE	13
		NEW JERSEY	19
		NEW YORK	39
		NORTH CAROLINA	23
		NORTH DAKOTA	13
		OHIO	75
		OKLAHOMA	6
		OREGON	26
		PENNSYLVANIA	30
		SOUTH CAROLINA	1
		SOUTH DAKOTA	3
		TENNESSEE	37
		TEXAS	124
		UTAH	13
		VERMONT	2
		VIRGINIA	5
		WISCONSIN	2
		Total	989

**Table V—Washington Secondary Migrants FY 2006-FY2008
(Source ORR)**

refugees receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) who are able to speak English; DOC provides subsidized work placements for TANF recipients, including refugees; and SBCTC provides work-related ESL and vocational training for refugees and immigrants.

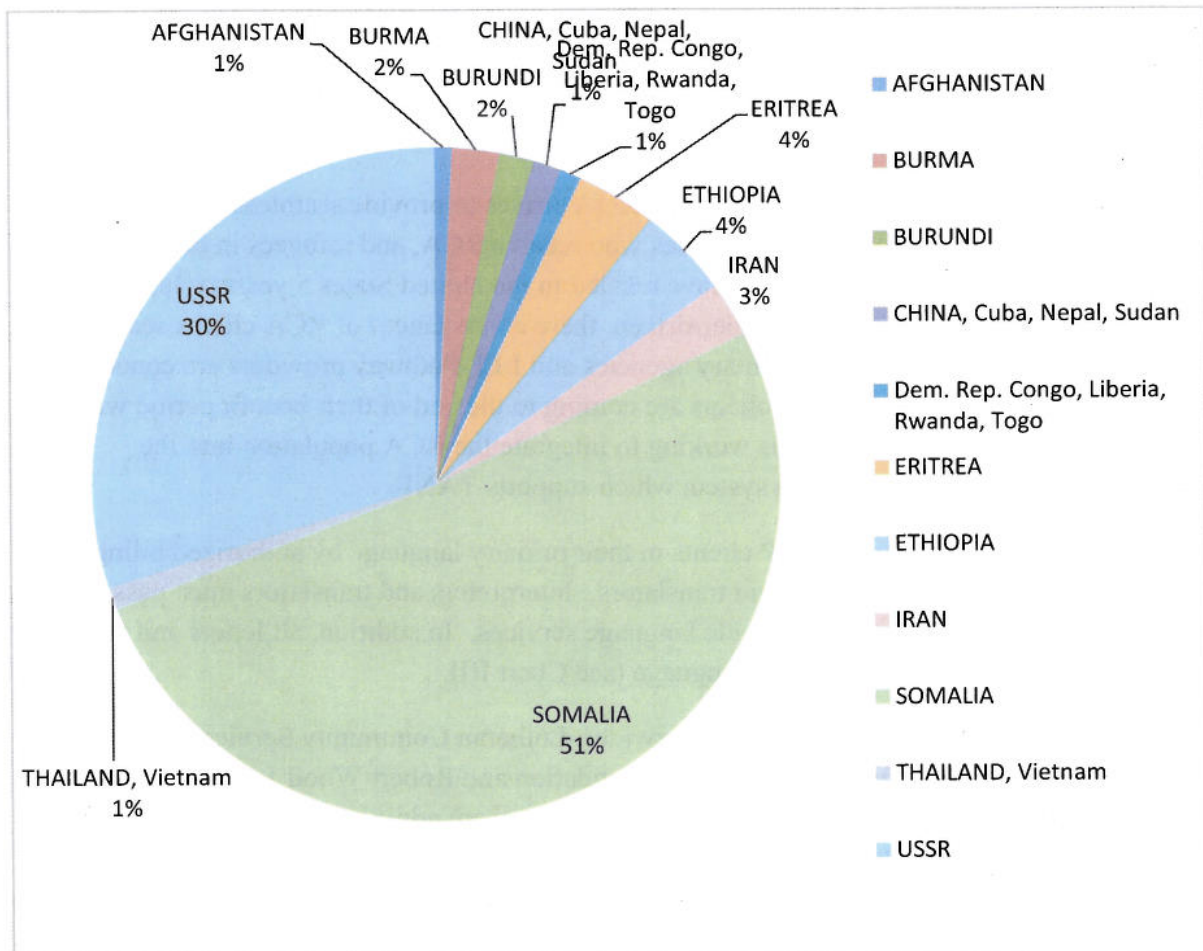


Chart II—Secondary Migrants, FY 2006-FY 2008 (Source ORR)

The state TANF program provides \$661 per month for a family of four. It is prospectively budgeted and has a Work-First model. It generally takes less than 30 days for a refugee family to qualify for cash and medical assistance and Food Stamps. As such, it is a much better program for refugees than the programs offered by many states. Most remarkably, Washington has been able to integrate its TANF and Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) and state benefits into a single program.

ORIA has implemented an employment services program called the Limited English Proficient (LEP) Pathway Program that specifically targets limited English proficient individuals, including refugees. The program focuses on LEP adults who receive cash assistance (e.g., TANF and RCA) and refugees who have resided in the US for 5 years or less. Services include job skills training, job search and employment placement, English as a second language (ESL) classes, and community service and work experience placements for TANF recipients. ORIA administers contracts with Volags and CBO's for the provision of employment services. ESL is provided mainly through contracts with local community colleges, although some CBO's and Volags also provide ESL.

By operating a single employment program, ORIA strives to provide seamless services to refugees and immigrants on TANF, refugees who receive RCA, and refugees in need who are not receiving cash assistance and who have resided in the United States 5 years or less. Because the RCA service referral system is paper-driven, there are instances of RCA clients seeming to "fall through the cracks." Both voluntary agencies and LEP Pathway providers are concerned that an increasing number of RCA clients are coming to the end of their benefit period without having found employment. ORIA is working to integrate the RCA population into the computerized referral and tracking system which supports TANF.

DSHS services are provided to LEP clients in their primary language by authorized bilingual workers or contracted interpreters and translators. Interpreters and translators must pass a certification test before they can provide language services. In addition, all letters and notices are sent to LEP clients in their target language (see Chart III).

ORIA has also supported a mental health provider, Lutheran Community Services Northwest in their application for funding from the Gates Foundation and Robert Wood Johnson to enhance mental health services to refugees. Under this grant, they are adding a mental health screening tool to use during the health screening process for newly arrived refugees. The proposal was approved by both foundations, and implementation will begin in the near future.

Washington provides an extraordinary level of services to its residents, including Limited English Proficient residents. Its TANF benefits are more generous than many states'; it maintains a General Assistance program for the elderly and disabled/incapacitated who do not qualify for TANF or SSI benefits; it initiated a state-funded Food Stamps program when immigrant populations were denied federal benefits; and it provides state funds for citizenship services and for employment services for LEP populations. Both the LEP employment and citizenship services are administered by the Refugee State Coordinator. The city of Seattle has also appropriated funds for citizenship assistance. Both the state and city have recognized that integration of new residents is in the interests of both immigrants and the communities in which they reside.

However, in the face of state and local budget crises, state and local funds are being cut. In addition, staff cutbacks and furloughs at the local level, in such areas as county health departments, are causing delays or difficulties in delivering some services.



Chart III—LEP TANF and RCA Clients, Age 18-64, SFY 2008 (Source: ORIA; N = 10,133 Cases)

b. Volags

There are currently six voluntary agencies providing resettlement services in the Seattle area (see Table VI). However, the affiliate of the United States Council of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has announced that it will discontinue resettlement services. In addition, Church World Services currently resettles through Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM), but has indicated it will withdraw from resettlement in Seattle. The state does not expect any significant impact on its overall arrival patterns as the remaining Volags will likely increase their resettlement numbers to

make up for the reductions caused by the closure of the USCCB and EMM resettlement. The voluntary agencies provide a broad range of resettlement services during the initial stages of resettlement, using a combination of Reception and Placement (R&P), refugee social services, ORR discretionary grants, contributions, foundation support, and (for some) Match Grant. All of the agencies indicate that they are currently unable to meet employment placement goals, falling below the goal of a 70% placement rate for employable adults.

Volag	Local Affiliate	Services
US Council of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)	Archdiocesan Housing Authority 4250 South Mead Seattle, WA 98118	Terminating resettlement
Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM)	Diocese of Olympia 1610 South King St. Seattle, WA 98144	R&P, LEP Pathway, IDA, micro-enterprise
International Rescue Committee (IRC)	International Rescue Committee 100 S. King St, Suite 570 Seattle, WA 98104	R&P, Matching Grant, LEP Pathway
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS)	Jewish Family Services 1601 16 th Ave Seattle, WA 98122	R&P, Matching Grant, LEP Pathway
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS)	Lutheran Community Services Northwest 433 Minor Ave North Seattle, WA 98109	R&P, Matching Grant, LEP Pathway
World Relief	World Relief 316 Maynard Ave S, #101 Seattle, WA 98104	R&P, Matching Grant, LEP Pathway
World Relief	World Relief N. 1522 Washington, Suite 204 Spokane, WA 99201	R&P, Matching Grant, LEP Pathway
World Relief	World Relief 123 W. 1 st Ave Kennewick, WA 99336	R&P, LEP Pathway

Table VI—Volags in the Seattle Metropolitan Area

Most cases are now coming as free cases, without substantial family support. Agencies find it increasingly difficult to recruit church sponsors, and only EMM continues to rely exclusively upon the sponsorship model. The voluntary agencies have volunteer recruitment programs which

provide for material donations and assistance in resettlement. EMM continues to focus on Southeast Asian family reunification cases, while all of the other agencies have a broad assortment of different languages and ethnicities.

Services to Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holders has improved since they are now included in the R&P process. However, procedural problems continue to inhibit services and early employment: transitioning to a federal law change that extends eligibility from six to eight months - including notifying staff and reopening cases that were closed but have become eligible again has caused confusion for both agencies and clients; the I-94 has no visa stamp showing their immigration status, so the Social Security Administration will not process applications for an SSN; and SIV clients are encountering problems getting their Employment Authorization Document. Finally, since SIV holders who do not find employment within 8 months are not eligible for federal means-tested benefits, their costs fall entirely upon the state. SIV holders in other states are less fortunate, since they will not be eligible for cash, medical and food assistance.

The Volags have bilingual staff capacity, but use paid interpreters to provide services to many of the newer or smaller groups for whom they have no staff capacity. Agencies share bilingual staff capacity on both a formal and informal basis. Several of the Volags also use VISTA and/or Americorps volunteers to supplement their staffing and serve as volunteer coordinators. ORIA provides state funds which help support the VISTA volunteers.

While all of the voluntary resettlement agencies have Seattle addresses, in fact, they have primarily moved resettlement into suburban areas where housing is more available and lower priced (see Table VI). In this process, they have developed geographic specialization within the sprawling greater Seattle area, and are actually serving distinct geographic areas. Some of the Volags offer services under discretionary grants, such as World Relief's IDA and Micro-enterprise programs. All agencies serve a wide range of languages and nationalities (see Charts I, II, and III).

c. Mutual Assistance Associations (MAAs)

Seattle has a large variety of MAAs at various stages of development. Some are large, well-established agencies with a broad funding base and diverse services. Some are new organizations struggling to establish themselves by developing sound administrative structures, adequate and sustainable budgets, and quality services. Some were established to serve ethnic populations which are no longer being resettled—some of these have chosen to diversify their staffing and client base to serve new refugees, while others will need to transition to non-refugee funding as their refugee mission wanes and their community integration and support functions continue. Some agencies are stable, enduring agencies, while others suffer from factionalism, or currently serve too few refugees to be viable service providers.

Ten MAAs have contracts for refugee services with ORIA, primarily to deliver Information and Referral services. Additional agencies receive subcontracts from other providers and participate in the refugee delivery system through a complex web of services. Many MAAs seek additional funding from ORIA and other agencies.

Some of the MAAs have successfully competed for ORR funding for MAA self-help development, and are now looking for ongoing funding as those grants end. Several of the MAAs are well-developed, long-standing organizations. Their directors and board members serve on local advisory boards and are helping the Seattle community understand and adapt to its diverse populations.

In the past, ORIA provided technical assistance to help small or new community based organizations become successful. This included infrastructure building, bookkeeping, and grant writing. Unfortunately, because of the current economic situation and reduced funds they stopped providing these services in December 2008.

There is an ongoing need to develop viable ethnic community-based organizations which can meet the service and social integration needs of refugees and former refugees. The limited time duration of refugee services funds often conflicts with the long-term developmental and funding needs of these agencies.

The “fragmentation” of the arriving refugee population has considerably complicated the task of developing supportive ethnic communities, and appears to be leading to secondary migration. For instance, it appears that 70% of the Somali population in Seattle is from secondary migration. Somalis originally scattered across the country have sought out friends and relatives whenever they lost a job, exceeded their TANF time limits, or needed other community supports. Many of these secondary migrants have been in the United States more than five years, but still rely upon MAAs and other parts of the refugee network for critical needs.

4. Program Funding

Program funding in Washington consists of a wide and diverse base of federal, state and local, public and private funds (see Annex A). In 2008, ORR provided fourteen different grants for services to refugees in Washington state. These included grants to the state: refugee social services funds, TAG formula funds for King/Snohomish and Spokane Counties, a TAG discretionary grant for hard to serve refugees, social services discretionary grants for refugee students in secondary school, elderly services and preventive health services. It provides health screening with Refugee Medical Assistance funds. ORR also provided grants to local agencies for Matching Grant, micro-enterprise services, Individual Development Accounts and ethnic community development services. In addition, it provides extensive services to refugees through TANF, which it supplements with state funds for the LEP Pathways program. It provides federal and state funding through its extensive medical assistance program. Case management and treatment for tuberculosis are provided by the state. The state of Washington provides \$2.8

million in state funds for citizenship assistance services. The city of Seattle also provides funding to assist new residents to become citizens. These funds provide for assistance with civics, forms completion, and can pay for the fees for those who are unable to obtain waivers.

ORIA and local providers have actively sought to access American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding (stimulus funding), with mixed results. They have been able to get additional positions from Title V of the Older Americans Act, and are seeking additional housing funds. They have been less successful in leveraging Workforce Investment Act funding.

5. Employment and Training

Employment-related Services

Due to the economic challenges affecting Washington State, there have been an increased number of refugee clients on public assistance. This may be due to a combination of increased new arrivals and individuals who have lost their jobs and are returning to public assistance. The total TANF caseload has been increasing substantially, and the LEP and refugee portions of that caseload have been increasing at a faster rate. Between June 2008 through July 2009, the TANF adult caseload in Washington rose 26%, from 35,380 to 44,464 adult clients. In that same time period, the refugee TANF caseload rose 36%, from 1,759 to 2,400. Currently 21% of the two-parent TANF caseload is Limited English Proficient.

The unemployment rate in Seattle in the past year has more than doubled, although it remains below the national average. With the tight job market during the second trimester, refugee job placements were down and there were also fewer 30 day and 90 day job retentions reported. The entered employment rate for the second trimester of 2009 was only 30%. Heavy arrivals of a very diverse refugee population have strained refugee programs. Washington is receiving a mix of refugees with multiple languages, and with educational levels ranging from highly skilled Iranian and Iraqi refugees, to those who are pre-literate in their own languages.

In State Fiscal Year 2010 (July 2009 through June 2010), ORIA obligated the following amounts for employment and ESL contracts:

- \$2.9 million federal funds from ORR,
- \$1.2 million in TANF funds, which are used for the LEP adults on TANF (about half of whom are refugees), and
- \$4.5 million in state funds.

Prior to SFY 2010, the state had allocated \$6 million in general state funds to the LEP Pathway program. However, because of the current economic situation, state funds were reduced to \$4.5 million beginning July 1, 2009.

To cope with the current economic and demographic challenges, Washington pursues a variety of strategies which combine language training with work skills development. It has recognized that its ability to successfully manage the TANF program requires that it successfully manage the participation and placement of Limited English Proficient refugees and immigrants. To date, it has been able to meet its TANF work participation requirements, led by effective participation of the LEP populations.

Needy clients go through a single eligibility determination process for TANF, RCA, Food Stamps, Medical Assistance, and child care (see Annex B). Adult recipients who cannot be diverted through provision of services such as Food Stamps, Medical Assistance and child care undergo a three-part assessment of their employment history, educational level and general background, from which an Individualized Employability Plan is developed. Those who have limited English fluency are referred to an LEP Pathway Provider (see Table VIII). The LEP Pathway provider completes a CASAAS language test to determine their level of English fluency.

This combination of TANF, state and Refugee Act funding is a creative response to a very significant problem. It enables the system to address the needs of LEP populations in a comprehensive, cost-effective program. However, it also ties programming to TANF participation requirements, which are not always in the best interest of refugee clients. Refugee clients typically need substantial amounts of time spent in language training, world of work orientation and supported job search. However, these activities only meet core participation requirements under TANF for a very short period of time. TANF participation requirements need to better reflect the needs of the LEP population.

For those with limited English and employment skills, the LEP Pathways case manager combines 12-15 hours of language training (which does not meet TANF requirements for participation in core work hours) with 20 hours of TANF core work activities such as community service, work experience, job skills training, or job search.

ORIA worked closely with service providers to develop a new “Bilingual Site Supervisor” (BSS) service for limited English proficient TANF parents participating in work experience (WEX) or community services (CS) activities. The intent of this service is to increase the number of WEX and CS opportunities for refugees and other non-English speaking TANF recipients, and to ensure this activity is effective in helping them develop skills and attitudes that enhance their ability to advance toward eventual employment.

Job developers work hard to identify a network of employers who have and will hire refugees. With larger employers, they place the best English speakers from any population group first, then use these workers as mentors for less skilled placements. Case managers help clients complete on-line applications. They are aided in this process by access software which is in multiple

languages. ORIA is examining the possibility of increasing placements by developing On the Job Training, using subsidies to cover employer training costs.

Service Provider	Service	Service
Highline Community College	ESL	
Highline Community College	ESL	
Jewish Family Service	Employment	WEX/CS
Lake Washington Technical College	ESL	
Neighborhood House	Employment	WEX/CS
North Seattle Community College	ESL	WEX/CS
Refugee Federation Service Center w/Puget Sound OIC	Employment	WEX/CS Job Skills Training
Refugee Women's Alliance	Employment & ESL	WEX/CS Job Skills Training
Renton Technical College	ESL	
Seattle Central Community College	ESL	
South Seattle Community College	ESL	
TRAC Associates	Employment	WEX/CS
World Relief	Employment & ESL	

Table VII—LEP Pathway Contractors 2009: Employment Services and English as a Second Language (Source—ORIA)

Refugees with substantial education and employment skills have been pushing for skills recertification training. A local community college recently started a recertification program for immigrants who worked in the health care field. If this is successful, they hope to expand to other occupations in the future.

Work Source, the state's administrator of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) is a part of the state's TANF partnership and participates in Local Planning Area meetings to plan Workfirst programs. However, refugee agencies have tried without much success to access WIA funds or services for refugees. The primary barriers seem to be: a difficult, computer driven, access system; lack of bilingual staff/interpreters; and system outcome goals which favor programs and clients able to get a "good job" paying \$20 per hour, rather than those most in need. Refugees need an intake system which deals with their lack of language, computer skills and world of work experience. This lack of access is particularly frustrating because of the great need for skill training services, and because refugees who move from welfare into work would help WIA meet its other major outcome goal—increased client income. This lack of access means that the LEP

Pathway providers were not aware of the WIA request for proposals for enhanced stimulus funding and were not able to access these funds.

As refugees spend longer periods in unemployment, ORIA has begun discussions with providers to increase job preparation activities. In performance-based contracts driven by employment outcomes, this will require development of meaningful outcome measures and new payment points. All providers are particularly concerned about the RCA population, which may have no safety net when the eight months of eligibility are done. A primary program constraint is that both TANF and ORR policies focus on rapid employment, and do not encourage investment in language training when the desired employment cannot be obtained.

Contracted employment service providers have close ties to the refugee and immigrant communities and hire bilingual staff. However, given the diversity of the languages served, services are often delivered through interpreters. For instance, one of the classes we observed was providing a class in financial literacy using English-speaking teachers and interpreters in three languages. This awkward and inefficient program design is one of the consequences of resettling refugees who do not share a common language.

Because of the integration with the TANF program, refugees are able to access child care, much of which is culturally competent in this community which is rich with diversity. Similarly, Seattle has a relatively well-developed public transportation system, and TANF provides bus passes to attend ESL and job search activities. However, RCA recipients are not able to access this transportation subsidy.

ORIA is piloting a One Stop service model at a local Neighborhood House in West Seattle. ESL, world of work orientation, computer skill training and employment services are all provided at a neighborhood center located in a low-income housing area. This is a very promising approach which assures 30 hours of participation in appropriate services each week. Morning sessions include primarily workforce ESL, while afternoons focus on job readiness training, including world of work training, financial literacy, and mock interviews. Students go on field trips to employment sites, to gain a hands-on understanding of the American workplace. Successful employment areas include the airport, hotels, Goodwill, and the hospitals. The recent move to allow LEP Pathway agencies to provide and bill for bilingual staff who supervise work experience has enabled agencies to use this tool to help refugees gain real experience with the American workplace. Because of the wide range of languages and educational levels of the refugees in this service area, the program managers and teachers struggle to make the content meaningful to all of the students.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

ORIA funds ESL for refugees and immigrants on public assistance through the combined funds of the LEP Pathways program. In addition, community colleges provide ESL which is available to all LEP populations. There are no waiting lists for ESL for TANF/RCA eligible refugees, but

there are waiting lists developing for those who have gained employment but want to continue to develop their language skills. As the number of clients seeking ESL has grown recently, class sizes have increased substantially. GED classes are in English, supplemented with bilingual staff in selected languages.

As refugees are laid off, they find additional barriers and gaps in the safety net. Many are laid off before they have sufficient work history to qualify for unemployment insurance. Those who do qualify for unemployment insurance are required to participate in job search or skill training. However, they often lack the skills to conduct job search without bilingual support. Also, the training which they most need—English as a Second Language instruction—does not meet the definition of a qualified training program.

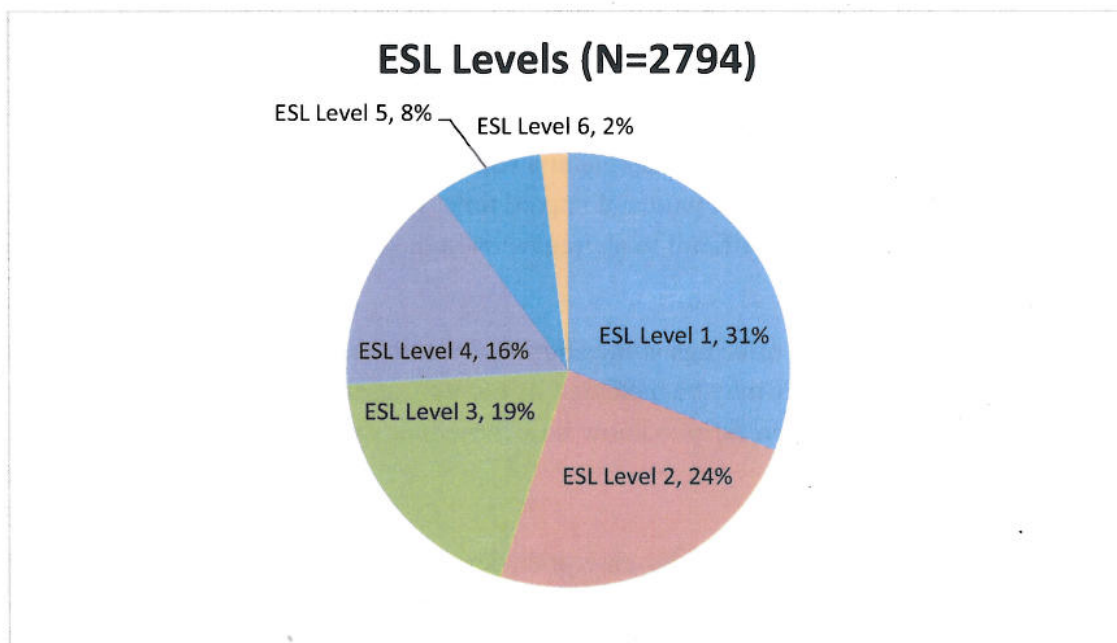


Chart IV—ESL Levels for TANF/RCA Clients (Source: ORIA)

Community colleges and other ESL service providers are reporting higher than projected enrollment rates for ESL instructional services among refugee clients during this period. Classes are open entry/open exit and employment service providers continue to try to make job placements while students are enrolled in ESL. On March 20, 2009 ORIA held a meeting of language training providers to discuss language level gains, methods and tools, as well as potential changes to contract payment points. ORIA plans to hold quarterly contractors meetings for further program planning.

For refugees with better English (Level 4 and above—see Chart IV) there are some opportunities for combining vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) and skill training in the

Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (IBEST) program. This provides integrated language and skill training in short term training programs such as grocery warehousing, welding, assembly and property management. Unfortunately, only 26% of the refugee TANF/RCA population test at ESL level 4 or above. There is a great need for bilingual training programs which can help those with limited English obtain family-supporting jobs.

ORIA piloted an intensive, "Immersion ESL" which provided 6 hours of ESL per day, rather than the 3-4 hours in the traditional ESL model. The Immersion model used bilingual teachers and included a strong orientation to the work force. After running two courses of Immersion ESL, they ran out of the funding necessary to sustain this more intensive model, and were not able to determine whether the program provided faster language acquisition and better employment outcomes than the traditional model. They applied for foundation funding to continue the pilot and conduct an evaluation, but have not yet been successful in obtaining funds.

Providers and refugees see a great need for workplace literacy programs. The community colleges have developed programs for teaching at a variety of companies, which allow for workers to attend ESL with a mix of paid and unpaid time. However, they struggle to make this a cost-effective option, since it is difficult to aggregate enough students to form an effective class size.

The ESL and other ABE class offerings at the community colleges have been reduced by state and local budget cutbacks. This may be mediated by recently appropriated stimulus funds for community colleges, but it is too early to know how these funds will be spent.

Micro-enterprise Development

The Diocese of Olympia operates a micro-enterprise development program with funding from the Office of Refugee Resettlement. It provides business training, pre-loan technical assistance, capital, and post-loan technical assistance to refugees and political asylees that want to start a new business sustain and expand an existing business. In the past few years, it has enrolled 230 refugees and political asylees, provided business training and pre-loan technical assistance (including business plan preparation) to 193 people, disbursed 130 loans that have created 198 jobs. Additionally, it has assisted nine refugees to get small loans for a total of \$191,000 from other sources, including Community Capital Development.

6. Health Care

Chart V represents the number of arrivals and their country of origin based on WRAPs data for the Seattle area in July-Dec 2008.

The Refugee Health Screening Clinic of Seattle/King County screened 760 refugees during this time period. During the second half of 2008 Seattle saw an overwhelming increase in the number of refugee arrivals, leading to a delay of up to 6 weeks for screening. By adding resources and clinic time, 100% of all refugees referred completed the screening within 90 days

of arrival date in the first part of 2009. The county public health agency also responded to those refugees relocating to King County who needed screening within the 90-day deadline. The public health agency also provides verification of immunization to support applications for permanent residency.

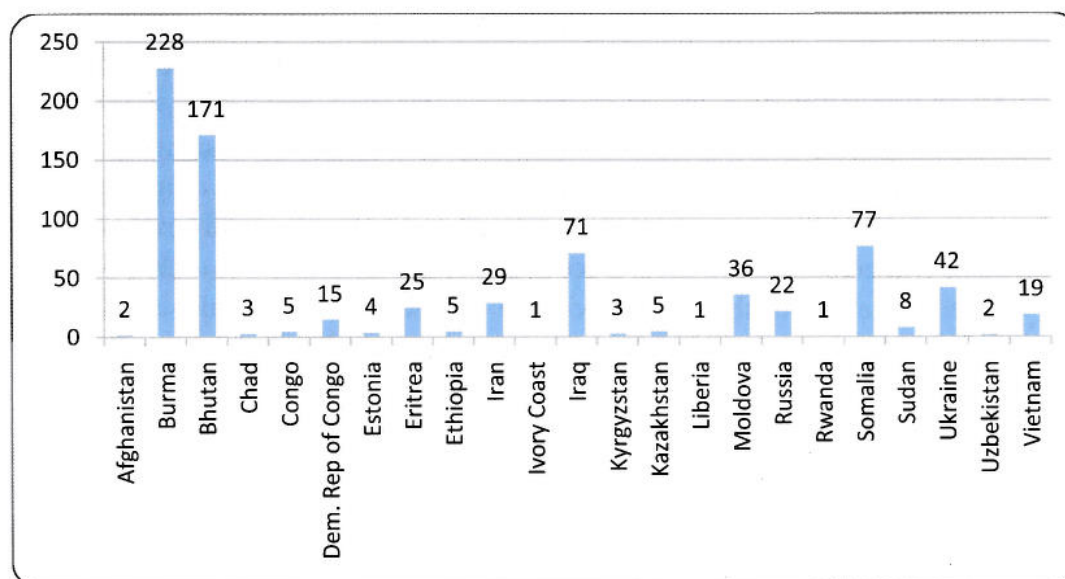


Chart V—Number of Arrivals and Country of Origin, Seattle Metropolitan Area, July-Dec. 2008 (Source: WRAPS)

Rapid screening is hindered by two problems: the Electronic Disease Notification (EDN) system has been slow in providing health information from the refugee camps; and local staff have been subject to furloughs. There is a three-month lag in EDN notification to the state and local health departments. As a result, agencies rely upon close coordination with the voluntary agencies, and the availability of clinic time has been substantially reduced. As housing becomes more tight, refugees are moving into new counties, and new screening programs and staff training must be developed.

Seattle received 52 individuals with tuberculosis-related Class B status during the first part of 2009 and performed 700 TB skin tests. Of those TB tests, 34% read positive and five new active TB cases were discovered this period. Of the public health agency clients, 96 are now on preventive INH treatment. Washington State funding supports all TB follow-up and care. King County and Tacoma Pierce County use all state dollars to support refugee clients with TB.

Local hospitals maintain interpreter training programs and their own interpreter banks. In addition, there are several community interpreter banks with qualified interpreters. When neither qualified bilingual staff nor interpreters are available, agencies rely upon the AT&T Language Line. When the swine flu fears arose, ORIA worked with the state Department of Health to ensure that translated information on the swine flu was available to refugee communities.

Translated materials are available on both the State and County Departments of Health websites but they are exploring ways to more effectively disseminate health information to the diverse refugee populations.

ORIA funds a bilingual mental-health program whose partners include the Public Health of Seattle and King County, Asian Counseling and Referral Services, and Lutheran Community Services Northwest and Refugee Women's Alliance. However, it wants to expand this service to meet a critical need. Many of the recent Iraqi arrivals have experienced significant levels of trauma. There is also a need to develop culturally competent alcohol and drug abuse services for a variety of populations. It is currently developing a cross-cultural mental health screening tool which it plans to incorporate into the refugee health screening process in order to effectively identify and treat mental health problems within a diverse population. This screening tool will be developed, implemented and validated over the coming years (See Pathways to Wellness model, Annex C).

The Ukrainian Community Center of Washington operates bilingual mental counseling, crisis intervention and adult day treatment programs funded by the state Aging and Disability Services Administration. The adult day treatment program is greatly needed but it is difficult to get through the 2-3 day assessment process needed to establish eligibility for these services. One of the barriers to service is understaffing in the local Elder Services program, due to budget cuts.

Arriving refugees have a variety of problems, primarily depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The difficulties of resettlement and poverty can exacerbate or create psychological problems. There is a great need for culturally competent services which include trained bilingual staff and a substantial case management component. The current provider has been very successful with this model, which is funded largely with Medical Assistance and county funds. The Washington environment supports the development of such programs, since its overall mental health model is based upon a 'rehabilitation' model with substantial case management, rather than a medical treatment model. However, there is an ongoing need to identify and train bilingual staff in a variety of languages.

Refugees with substantial mental health problems should qualify for Supplemental Security Income (SSI), but will be subject to the nine-year time limit on SSI eligibility. They must naturalize in order to maintain their SSI benefits. Those with a disability which prevents them from learning English and civics can qualify for a waiver of these tests in the naturalization process. However, providers report that the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) frequently turns down such waiver requests, and questions the physician's qualifications. The mental health program is trying to train physicians in how to complete waiver requests in accordance with USCIS requirements.

Washington has a mandatory arrest law for domestic abuse situations, which is poorly understood by refugees. There is a multi-lingual help line which can refer victims to culturally

competent services, but there is no organized program designed to educate refugees about family violence and services to prevent violence or deal with its consequences.

7. Elementary and Secondary Education

ORIA administers the School Impact Grant from the Office of Refugee Resettlement and contracts with schools which agree to maintain funded partnerships with local mutual assistance associations. The program is designed to build bridges between schools and refugee communities, increase parent involvement, and improve graduation rates by providing mentoring/tutoring, parenting education and other enhanced educational services. They also try to address emerging mental health concerns and develop employment opportunities for older youth.

Representatives of the refugee communities, and nearly all agencies, expressed rising concerns regarding youth disaffection and gang activity. However, they have not identified funding to develop programs capable of addressing this broad concern.

In Seattle, ORIA contracts with the Seattle Public Schools for School Impact Grant services. The District, in turn, contracts with seven Mutual Assistance Associations.

The district provided multiple trainings for the refugee community-based partners including: (1) Using translated math kits with refugee students and families; (2) Supporting students with the district's current Everyday Math curriculum, (3) Adult sexual misconduct, and (3) Helping families to use the district's website to access student information. The following sections indicate the kinds of initiatives the School Impact subcontracts support.

Horn Of Africa Services

Staff members have been trained on: (1) Environmental educational programs and teaching techniques for effective environmental programs; (2) Conflict resolution and conflict management, an 18-hour course offered by the county's dispute center; and (3) Tutoring Strategies through the All City Tutor Training offered in Seattle.

Refugee Women's Alliance (ReWA)

ReWA Youth Staff participated in numerous trainings this school year including: The Bridge Conference, Refugee School Impact Grant trainings, "Math Kit" training, All-City Tutor Training, and a diversity workshop on immigrant students. These trainings provided staff with new knowledge, skills, and strategies on issues ranging from student assessment to working well with high school students. The trainings also provided valuable time to network with other educators and youth workers.

East African Community Services

Staff members have been enrolled in School's Out Washington's Pathway to Excellence (PTE) project, a professional development program specific to working with English Language Learners (ELLs)). This relationship provided opportunities to build skills and practical techniques for tutoring ELLs and provided staff with access to other special training events.

With the support of the PTE project and other resources, the program has conducted a number of tutor trainings specific to working with ELLs. The trainings have been attended by a mix of volunteer tutors, staff, and service-learning students (including bilingual high school students from the community).

By training community-based volunteers and offering them opportunities for increased responsibility and leadership in the program, investments are being made in future bilingual para-educators and teachers.

Somali Community Services of Seattle

The agency sent staff to *The Bridge from School to Afterschool and Back* Conference. Based on ideas on interactive learning games from the conference, staff created 12 different game kits, and then trained the agency's tutors and other staff on the usage of the game in their tutoring practices. To date, interactive learning kits that have been produced include: math, alphabet, history, English-Somali, geography.

8. Elderly and Vulnerable Populations

ORIA manages a Services to Older Refugees grant from ORR. At \$100,000/yr, the grant is small relative to the need, particularly given that services must be statewide. In the past, this funding provided direct services to the elderly, and when the money ran out, the services stopped. However, with the current grant, they hired a consultant to identify services available to elderly individuals in the community; and providers with the capacity to provide language support for these elders. The goal is to leverage existing services in the community, and to identify which providers need support to enhance their capacity to provide culturally appropriate services.

A work group has been formed with providers to identify ways to strengthen the ability to provide services in a client's target language.

Elderly refugees often have a difficult time adjusting to a new culture in the US and are at risk of being marginalized because of their age, inability to speak English, and lack of knowledge of services that are available in the community. Elderly refugees are often ignored in the early stages of resettlement, when the focus is on employment and housing concerns. In some areas of the state, there is limited availability of culturally appropriate services for refugee elders, which increases the potential for social isolation.

Elders are also caught in a service Catch-22. Their needs are likely to increase with age, rather than decline over time. However, refugee funds are short-term, mainstream service systems lack bilingual resources, and elders lack knowledge of these systems. The primary mainstream service provided to elderly refugees is SSI, which is threatened if refugees do not succeed in naturalizing within seven (now nine) years. Therefore, the primary social service provided to older refugees is naturalization, but when refugees naturalize, they become ineligible for all other refugee services—including services to help them navigate complex systems.

A 2008 Strategic Planning Project Report for Refugee Elder Services described the need for a coordinated, cross-sector system approach to better link refugee elders to existing services and to develop services in areas where they are lacking. The report identified the following key barriers to access for elderly services:

- Linguistic and cultural limitations of current outreach efforts which leave ethnic elders uninformed about aging services;
- Lack of connection/effective communication/working partnerships between cross-sector, human service stakeholders;
- Under-funding of aging programs that forces difficult choices which impact the provision of culturally appropriate outreach and caregiver support services; and
- Lack of ethnic elder engagement in community leadership, education, and peer advocacy roles.

With the help of the Elder Services Grant, ORIA is breaking down these barriers, and they have a willing partner in the Aging and Disability Services Administration. In each local site, the grant hires a part-time staff and a refugee peer elder (who is usually on SSI) to plan and develop civic engagement and naturalization activities. They have also developed ethnic congregate meal sites and provide advocacy and leadership development to empower the elderly. They were also able to increase use of positions funded under Title V of the Older Americans Act (Senior Community Service Employment) when stimulus funding increased the availability of Title V slots.

Washington has a General Assistance (GA) program for low-income, elderly and disabled individuals who do not qualify for SSI. There are approximately 3000 refugees and immigrants, age 65 and over, who are on that program. Presumably these refugees would be eligible for SSI if they naturalize. This assistance program costs the state hundreds of thousands of dollars every month. Therefore, they are undertaking an SSI outreach effort, to refer refugees to the state- and city-funded naturalization programs. They send outreach letters in 30 languages, to notify clients concerning SSI and how to obtain citizenship. Naturalizing these individuals and moving them to SSI would increase their monthly income, as the SSI payment is nearly double the GA monthly cash grant, and would save the state thousands of dollars every month.

The national economic downturn has produced pluses and minuses in terms of the long term goals of creating an Elder Services safety net. While many community service organizations

struggle, and larger organizations continue to trim budgets, reductions have nudged managers to look for available low cost and no cost solutions to maintain services. With elders demonstrating an interest in learning about navigating community service systems, they are viewed with growing interest as a source of potential capacity.

9. Housing

The lack of affordable housing is becoming an increasingly critical issue, as neither the R & P grant, minimum wages, nor TANF payment amounts have kept up with increases in the cost of rent. The TANF and RCA grants are not sufficient to pay for average rents in the community, and rents continue to rise. As the time it takes to find employment is now increased, Volags are trying to seek out donations to provide rent subsidies to avoid evictions, and are spending substantial amounts of money, beyond federal grants, to subsidize housing. They are also moving resettlement out to more suburban areas where housing is less costly, but this makes it difficult for refugees to access the service systems which have been built up in the city of Seattle.

Refugees double up in housing, exceeding lease limits and creating landlord/tenant problems. As refugees get laid off, evictions are increasing, although agencies do not have data on the prevalence of this problem. While there does not appear to be a large population of refugees in shelters, secondary migrants arriving without resources create homelessness crises which stress both the shelter and refugee systems. Homeless refugees, or those facing eviction, are eligible for a one-time-only emergency housing assistance payment.

There is a 2-5 year waiting list for subsidized housing/rental assistance. There is also a need for housing units with 3-4 bedrooms for larger refugee families.

The Episcopal Migration Ministries operates an Individual Development Account (IDA) program which can assist employed refugees to save to become home-owners. ORIA has recently formed a housing task force to identify resources and strategies for dealing with critical housing problems. Habitat for Humanity has helped the refugee network build two houses for transitional housing.

10. Conclusions and Recommendations

Strengths and Best Practices

This is an extraordinarily effective program, with a high degree of interagency coordination and cooperation. The relatively large and strong staff of ORA provide leadership and aggressively seek out discretionary refugee funding and other federal and state funds.

Seattle is a community which welcomes and fosters diversity. It has built strong institutions, such as educational systems and interpreter banks, which foster access to services and community integration.

LEP Pathways program provides integrated programming for refugees and immigrants on TANF and RCA. It uses a combination of refugee, TANF and state funds. It has demonstrated the ability of refugees/refugee programs to meet TANF participation requirements. It also provides client notices in multiple languages Contact:.

Pathways to Wellness mental health program provides multi-lingual, culturally competent mental health services. Incorporating mental health screening into their health screening protocol.

For information on the LEP Pathways Program or the Pathways to Wellness Program, call or e-mail Tom Medina, ORIA Chief and WA State Refugee Coordinator, at MedinTR@dshs.wa.gov , Tel. (360) 725-4636

Recommendations:

Employment and Training

ORIA should investigate opportunities for enrolling RCA recipients in the Food Stamp Employment and Training program in order to obtain bus passes for this population.

National recommendations

One of the most clear impacts of the economic downturn is that more refugees are passing the eight month time period for eligibility for refugee cash and medical assistance, without obtaining self-sufficiency. The original duration of benefits under the Refugee Act was 36 months, which more closely matches the time-frame necessary for a majority of refugees to obtain economic self-sufficiency and social stability. The TAMS appropriation should be made sum-sufficient and support at least 12 months of benefits. A sum-certain appropriation is not appropriate for a safety-net program which cannot predict nor control its caseload. It is particularly counterproductive in the refugee program, since, at the moment when refugee needs and economic stimulus would argue for increased assistance, ORR may have to cut back on RCA time limits because of increased caseloads.

For employment outcomes, while continuous improvement is a laudable objective, a form which automatically drives a 3% increase in program goals does not promote the kind of focused, realistic planning which is needed to adapt to changing circumstances, such as the economic and demographic changes communities are now experiencing. Employment goals under GPRA, Match Grant and R&P should not be eliminated, but should be realistic in terms of the employment situation. Data on employment outcomes should continue to be used as one of the factors to help guide placement of free cases.

Refugees and agencies in the resettlement communities visited felt strongly that the refugee program should refocus on community integration as the primary goal. It must deal with

integration more broadly than it currently does, developing meaningful outcomes in all of the following areas:

- Education for children and adults
- Stable housing/home ownership
- Economic self-sufficiency
- Access to health and mental healthcare
- Civic engagement/citizenship
- Community acceptance

Mainstream money in almost every category of service tends to go through closed systems which exclude community based organizations and refugees. Refugee funding efforts should focus on short term needs, while laying the groundwork, developing partnerships and leveraging funds for long term mainstream programs to provide ongoing services. ORR and State Coordinators need to advocate consistently, and partner effectively, with other agencies which administer services critical to refugees, including TANF, WIA, Elderly Services, mental health and USCIS.

The TANF agency should consult with ORR and other LEP providers in order to revise the participation requirements for LEP immigrants. TANF participation requirements should fully recognize ESL participation and support tailored VESL programs.

Include youth investment and gang prevention services under refugee discretionary grants, including partnering with agencies which fund gang prevention.

The resettlement program should give greater attention to refugee mental health. This includes greater funding, but also providing leveraging and technical assistance to develop ongoing, culturally competent mental health services. Poor mental health is a major barrier to a stable family and social life, and to productive employment. ORR should incorporate mental health services and program development on an ongoing basis into refugee core funding.

Intensify federal efforts to ensure SSI and services under the Older Americans Act are available to refugees.

The refugee network at the federal and state levels needs to develop a consistent strategy for fostering ethnic leadership and community development which sets the foundation for long-term community integration and is flexible and nimble enough to address the changing demographics of the populations it serves.

All those eligible for refugee benefits (including asylees) should be included in the data systems and notifications for State Coordinator and Health Coordinator. Data on all asylees should be published on a state-level basis. All those made eligible for refugee benefits should have a consistent level and duration of benefits for both refugee benefits and services, and for other means-tested public benefits.

State Department should issue quarterly communiqués, updating the system concerning changes in the “pipeline” for each country or Region.

The Department of State should resolve the problems in order to provide timely notification and health information through the EDN system.

USCIS should be consistent in providing fee waivers to all applicants receiving Food Stamps or medical assistance. It should clarify requirements for disability waivers, be consistent in interpretation, and provide training to refugee organizations and physicians who see large numbers of disabled refugees.

States have had varying results in their efforts to ensure that refugees have access to services funded under the Recovery Act. ORR should facilitate this process by creating a directory of funding streams where funds are appropriated, and by advocating with granting agencies.

State coordinators and state analysts should have knowledge of funding and outcomes for all programs in the states for which they are responsible for planning and monitoring. At least six different funding sources potentially fund employment and training services (SS, TAG formula, TAG discretionary, Match Grant, TANF, WIA). Without knowing all of the funds going into the outcomes, it is impossible for ORR and State Coordinator to evaluate results.

ORR should make available to states complete information concerning the number who have entered and left the state in the past three years for all refugees, parolees, entrants, asylees and other populations eligible for refugee benefits.

Annexes

WASHINGTON

STATE CONTACT

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ARRIVING POPULATIONS

2005	2006	2007	2008
3,188	2,924	2,943	8,540

EMPLOYMENT

	2006	2007	2008
Caseload	2,627	1,937	2,751
Entered Employment	699 27%	937 48%	1,078 39%
Terminations	382 75%	469 71%	365 55%
Reductions	68 13%	186 28%	47 7%
Average Wage	\$ 9.68	\$ 9.25	\$ 9.55
Retentions	786 74%	687 72%	748 82%
Health Benefits	98 18%	228 34%	253 30%

FORMULA GRANTS

	2006	2007	2008
CMA	\$ 6,762,000	\$ 4,877,000	\$ 6,252,331
Social Services	\$ 3,026,832	\$ 3,558,000	\$ 3,178,453
Targeted Assistance	\$ 1,835,259	\$ 1,754,000	\$ 1,552,818
TOTAL	\$ 11,624,091	\$ 10,189,000	\$ 10,983,602

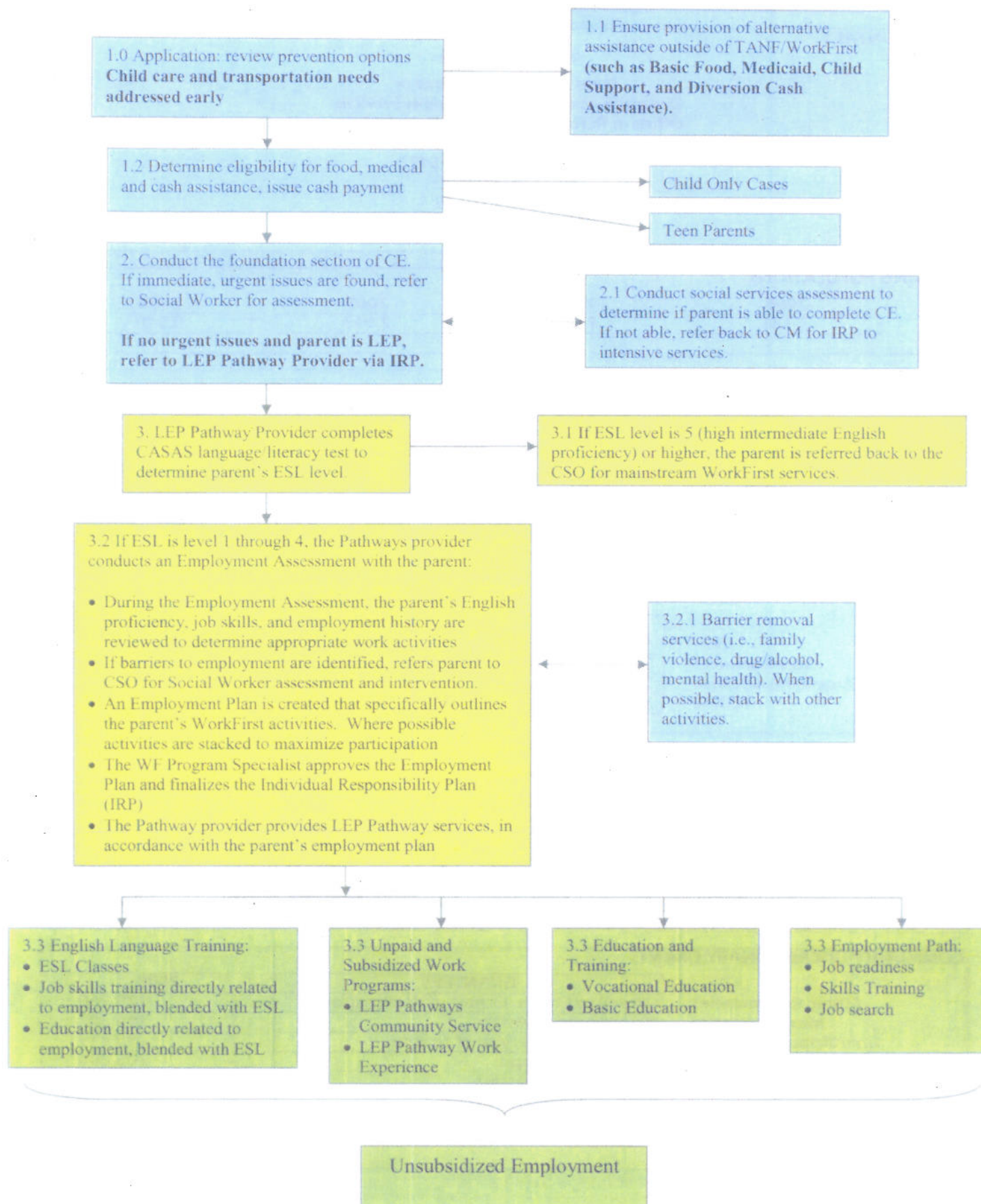
STATE ADMINISTERED DISCRETIONARY GRANTS

	2006	2007	2008
Cuban Haitian			
School Impact	\$ 1,156,250	\$ 1,156,250	\$ 1,156,250
Services to Older Refugees	\$ 115,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000
Preventive Health	\$ 200,000	\$ 200,000	\$ 200,000
Targeted Assistance	\$ 350,000	\$ 350,000	\$ 350,000
TOTAL	\$ 1,821,250	\$ 1,806,250	\$ 1,806,250

COMMUNITY DISCRETIONARY GRANTS

	GRANTEES	2008
Ethnic Communities	Ukrainian Comm. Center of Washington	\$ 129,960
Microenterprise	Neighborhood Assets	\$ 194,307
Unanticipated Arrivals	Jewish Family Service of Seattle	\$ 293,419
Individual Development Accounts	Diocese of Olympia	\$ 205,000
Individual Development Accounts	Neighborhood Assets	\$ 50,000
Unaccompanied Alien Children Serv.	Pioneer Human Services	\$ 1,698,000
Unaccompanied Alien Children Serv.	YouthCare	\$ 550,417
	TOTAL	\$ 3,121,103

LEP Pathways Participant Flow



PATHWAYS TO WELLNESS:

Integrating Refugee Health and Well-Being

Project partners: Asian Counseling and Referral Services, Lutheran Community Services Northwest, Public Health Seattle & King County, Dr. Michael Hollifield

Overview

The refugee experience is both traumatic and complex. Most refugees experience or witness extreme acts of violence, and live year after year in camps displaced from their homelands amid great deprivation. Even the promise of a new life in the US comes with loss. Studies show that if refugees can get adequate support, they are more likely to proceed towards successful psychological and cultural integration into their new society. If these supports are absent, the stressful demands of resettlement, along with past trauma and separation from family and friends, can put refugees at high risk for mental health issues, alienation, and marginalization.

Project Plan & Activities

Pathways to Wellness: Integrating Refugee Health and Well-Being is a structural approach to the reliable screening, referral, and treatment of the mental health needs of refugees. Through collaboration with Public Health, the project utilizes an existing central entry point for refugees and culturally competent screening tools to connect clients to care that addresses both mental health and social support systems. This model enables early intervention through the primary healthcare system and focuses on holistically meeting the needs of refugees. The project is designed to establish valid, reliable screening tools, and create a service delivery system capable of being replicated in other locales. The structural delivery and holistic scope are key factors in the project goals of 1) increasing the emotional well-being of refugees so that they may better adjust to life in the United States and have an increased capacity for self-sufficiency, and 2) create a replicable service delivery model that can be used in other locales.

Measurable Outcomes

Specific outcomes include:

- ✓ Coordination of care through primary healthcare system for early intervention.
- ✓ Mental health screening and linkage for incoming refugees to King County (14+ years).
- ✓ Validating cross-cultural screening tool with an appropriate sample size of refugees.
- ✓ Improvement in well-being at service exit as measured by validated instruments.
- ✓ Outreach and education to local agencies that serve refugees.

At the end of the project the screening tool will be incorporated into regular screening practices for refugees in King County. The partnership believes that *Pathways* will become a model program for refugee resettlement throughout the country, and be an important tool for primary care physicians working with refugee populations.

*To learn more about this project, call the Beth Farmer at
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